

I WANT TO BE A SPEAKER

A HANDBOOK

by

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Provincial Normal School
Victoria, B.C., Canada



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PREFACE.

THERE are many manuals of speech on the market at the present time, but few which have the merit of being short, definite, and simple to follow. This little book has those desirable qualities.

It does, concisely, just what it purports to do: offer some helpful suggestions and set some definite exercises for the benefit of those desirous of improving their ability to speak well. Furthermore it attempts, in a simple manner, to explain enough of the bodily mechanisms of speech to render intelligent and meaningful to the reader the work demanded by the author to bring about the desired end.

The question-and-answer method employed in the latter part of the book is particularly useful to the would-be orator because it poses some questions which every indifferent speaker has at some time asked himself or others but to which he has seldom been able to get a satisfactory answer.

In the second place, it not only tells the inquirer where he is failing but what he had better do to ensure improvement.

Having said this much is not to promise that this book, or any other book, will take the place of the patient and repeated effort which the author enjoins in several places; but since these hints and drills have proved efficacious in the past it seems reasonable to predict that they will, with the patient perseverance of the pupil, again help in overcoming many speech difficulties, many nervous reactions, and many tendencies to undesirable mannerisms in public speaking.

HENRIETTA A. R. ANDERSON.

INTRODUCTION.

I PRESENT this handbook to a public which has been my inspiration and delight for many years. That same good public has asked me questions regarding speech on the street, in trams, in powder-rooms, at club meetings, and in many other places. People have no hesitancy in tossing questions my way and expecting an immediate reply as enlightening and beneficial as an electric bulb. No one would think of stopping a doctor on the street to ask him to diagnose his case of neuritis, as it were, but they never have the slightest hesitancy in according me this signal honour.

It is because of this prevailing interest and inquiring attitude of mind that I have put into these pages many of the questions asked, and the answers to them, in a concise and clear-cut manner.

Effective and gracious speech is worth all the effort one may spend upon its acquisition. It is one of the great arts. What stimulated a stunned nation into action? The spoken words of that Master of Speech—Winston Churchill.

Speech is a living thing wrought through the greatest of all media, the human instrument of tone and articulation.

In democratic America we have at last begun to become speech conscious. All have a perfect right to air views on topics of the day, but the speaker who offends our ears with faulty diction, mumbled articulation, and lack of resonance is an abomination. It is not necessary to do these things or be that kind of person. Careful reading of the following pages will help you correct your more obvious faults, and place you on the way to satisfaction and enjoyment in the company of your fellow-men.

E. R. B.

I WANT TO BE A SPEAKER.

"No nation in the civilized world speaks its language as abominably as the English."—H. C. DEAKON in "Singing," Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians (Macmillan & Co.).

"If any one doubts the importance of an acquaintance with the principles of Physiology as a means to complete living, let him look around and see how many men and women he can find in middle age or later life who are thoroughly well."—HERBERT SPENCER.

I am taking the words of these two indisputable authorities as a guide to my book in the hope of helping ordinary persons who have something to say and are willing to apply a few simple rules so as to be able to express themselves when on their feet.

WHY CAN'T I SPEAK IN PUBLIC?

You can.

Read the above statement of Spencer's and gain knowledge of Vocal Physiology which will help to develop an incredible agility of the vocal organs.

The vocal organs of the human instrument are delicate, but if naturally trained are capable of reaching almost unlimited strength. People are all too often led into the error of comparing the human instrument of sound to other instruments. The organist, for example, uses a mechanical instrument constructed out of foreign material and made for him. If this instrument breaks he has it mended or gets another. The speaking voice is built from an instrument that can be ruined beyond mending.

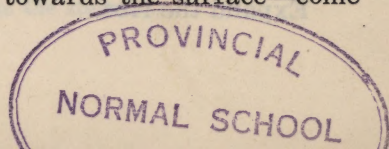
Begin by remembering the following rules:—

- (1.) Honestly search for your faults.
- (2.) Acknowledge them, then face up squarely to them.
- (3.) A fault recognized is a fault partly overcome.

Now start to work.

In almost every case, faults of speech result from lack of control of the right muscles. A speaker must be well informed in the anatomy of the body before attempting to use any muscle as a means of speech. No artist would attempt to paint a portrait without first having a knowledge of the nude.

All teaching of the law of art must start with a thorough and deep knowledge of fundamentals; thus all expression of the spoken word will grow and radiate towards the surface—come



from the inside out. It must always be an "outward manifestation of an inward condition." Even when you think you have become expert you will find yourself slipping back to old habits, over and over again. The difference now is, you will know what to do about it. It has been rightly said "A self-taught artist is one taught by a very ignorant person."

To those who ask "Why can't I speak in public?" I would say first study vocal physiology. Before you begin to use the exercises begin by knowing what organs are most often used to speak with.

- (1.) Diaphragmatic breathing.
- (2.) The action of the articulatory organs—tongue, lips, and teeth.
- (3.) The formation and use of the pharynx.
- (4.) The use and action of the larynx.

The approach to the exercises for voice improvement must be to divide the body into three parts—Three Thirds.

THE FIRST THIRD is from the top of the head to the first intersection of nerves which lies at the back of the neck just above the shoulders.

THE SECOND THIRD lies from this first intersection to the second intersection which is at the end of the spine, just above the hips.

THE THIRD THIRD is from the second part to the balls of the feet. These three thirds are kept in mind all the time during the exercises to promote order and method by working first in part and then in unity.

EXERCISE 1.

Stand erect on the balls of the feet.

Think the head high.

That which we call the CENTRE of the body (where the third rib meets the sternum or breast-bone) is lifted by the intercostal muscles. Lift the body as though by this CENTRE up and down on the balls of the feet. At the same time relax all the muscles of the back, from the shoulders down. Shake these muscles until there is no constriction in them. Keep the whole torso lifted as though it were being drawn up by the CENTRE.

If the body were hung from a hook in the ceiling by this CENTRE, so that the feet would be off the floor, every organ within the body and all extremities would fall into their right places and the organs be lifted to them.

Think the crown of the head high.

Expand the ribs.

All pressure is lifted off the diaphragm.

While in this position force the diaphragm to act by its own muscular power.

Keep this position and follow closely the exercises given:—

- (a.) Head up, arms relaxed, heels together.
- (b.) Relax head on chest then raise it quickly up to first position.
- (c.) Relax head to the back, eyes closed and jaw relaxed—dropped.
- (d.) While in the relaxed position (c) roll the head from side to side; bring to “up” position between each exercise.
- (e.) Bend head to right. Up. Bend head to left. Up. Do this eight times.
- (f.) Relax head on chest, then rotate, in a circle, to the right, counting ten. At the count of ten, the head has completed the whole circle. Up. Repeat to the left.

At all times during the exercises of rolling the head, keep the face to the front. NEVER TWIST THE THROAT MUSCLES. This exercise helps to loosen the jaw by releasing the constriction of the muscles controlled by the “First intersection of nerves” which lies at the base of the skull.

EXERCISE 2.

Hands on hips.

Jump on balls of feet to a broad base.* Move centre from the ball of one foot to the ball of the other without lifting the feet from the floor.

- (a.) While on this broad base drop forward from the hips, relax head, arms and shoulders forward. The body is now in a position of perfect relaxation from the hips up, forward.
- (b.) While in this position swing the body from the hips to the right and then left, as though the body was a sack of meal.
- (c.) Bring the body back to the front (still relaxed) and in one movement swing the body to an erect position, arms still relaxed at the sides.
- (d.) Jump on the balls of the feet to an erect position.

* NOTE.—A broad base is when the student can feel the move of the centre of the body (where the third rib meets the sternum).

EXERCISE 3.

Jump to a broad base.

- (a.) Bring the centre of the body over the ball of the right foot.
- (b.) Bring the body back to the broad base.
- (c.) Bring the centre of the body over the ball of the left foot.
- (d.) Swing the centre of the body from the ball of the left foot to the ball of the right foot in a rhythmic movement.

Hands on hips and consciousness of the hip-joint movement.

Repeat this many times.

The instrument is now tuned.

WHAT IS THE BEST METHOD TO STUDY?

The student gropes through many methods and often becomes confused. There need be no confusion where science lights the way. All public speakers should be scientifically trained in the mechanics and right use of the muscles that produce speech.

Many teachers and students get off the track because they are so busy applying the top-dressing that they lose sight of the true basic principles of production.

It is sad but true, that few pay any attention to these principles until the voice fails or the speaker does not improve, or, worse still, becomes suddenly aware of an embarrassing loss of tone. Then it may be too late to do anything about it.

There is one thing to be remembered. Speech is a natural process and any method that is not natural is wrong. The instructor who attempts to force a voice in the slightest degree is wrong.

A method must follow the lines of Cause, Means, and Effect.

The Mind is the Cause.

The Body the Means.

The Voice the Effect.

Every normal person is born with the vocal organs to make a noise with, and, I am sorry to say, most of them are satisfied to do only that. Most people allow their voices to drop out of their mouths as though they were something they wanted to get rid of as quickly as possible, not as an unforgettable sound—"A thing of beauty and a joy for ever."

There is a great deal of difference between genius and talent, and between degrees of talent. This must be realized. An instructor must not exploit talent but train it by natural methods

until control and flexibility are adequate for true and thorough response.

The benefit of the few exercises I have given you is apparent. They cultivate good poise and vibration of the human instrument, releasing the diaphragm from constriction so that the breath taken into it can fill it and be consciously controlled.

Action and reaction is the objective. The centre leading, and the extremities following. When these few exercises are followed faithfully, the body will soon become responsive and a MEANS of expression through the spoken word.

Breath is the material of which sound is made.

The breath must always support the tone.

There must always be more than enough breath, not only to move the vocal ligaments but to be behind and under the tone that is produced after it leaves the mouth. The speaker must never give the impression that he has used all the breath he has in the last syllable but actually has enough and some to spare.

The diaphragm may be compared to a bellows and must be consciously so used.

The hard palate or roof of the mouth is composed of a solid bone and is meant to be a resonator. All sounds must be blown forward hitting against this resonator. The bony structure of the nose and face are important to both speech and song.

The throat must not be actively used to produce speech. The throat is a tube for the sound to pass through. The best method of study is the one that gives you a thorough knowledge of vocal physiology.

The formation of the throat is as follows:—

The hard palate forms the dome or roof of the mouth.

The soft palate lies behind this hard one and it is in this soft palate that the difficulties often arise. This soft palate is formed by four divisions and is called the pharynx. The divisions are:—

- (1.) The Vocal Passage.
- (2.) The Nasal Passage.
- (3.) The Œsophagus or Food-track.
- (4.) The Trachea or Windpipe.

These explanations are given in the simplest and most usable form. The anatomical terms you can look up in any book dealing with the subject.

The pharynx must be kept healthy and free from all muscular activity. The large base muscle is apt to be over-active and cause what is called "throatiness" or a muffled sound. When active it closes these passages, and thus prevents a full support of tone.

The tip of the tongue must be made active by rolling it on the sound of "R." Practise holding the tip of the tongue behind the lower teeth when the vowel-sounds are used. When the vowel-sound of "AH" is sounded the tongue must lie on the bottom of the mouth touching the teeth all around, only thus can the tone pass over it unimpaired and clear.

The old family doctor of long ago would use the handle of a spoon to press down the large muscle of the tongue at the back of the throat to examine it. The doctor of to-day tells you to open your mouth and say "AH."

There are three places where the flow of sound can be blocked—the pharynx, the jaw, and the lips.

Breath is inhaled as well as exhaled from the vocal and nasal passages. Do not confuse this with the inhaling of breath through the nose to fill the diaphragm. I say this so that you will get the picture of the inhaling and exhaling through these four passages or openings.

The œsophagus is the passage through which food is taken into the body.

The trachea is the passage through which air is taken into the lungs.

These openings lie in the pharynx but are of secondary use when compared with the oral and nasal passages.

EXERCISES FOR THE LIPS.

(1.) Drop the jaw. Do not put it down but DROP it down, opening the mouth as you do this.

(2.) Drop the head to the back as in Exercise 1, section (c). Close the eyes and drop the jaw. Feel that you are not just putting the head back, but relaxing it so that the jaw is also relaxed.

(3.) While the head is relaxed to the back and the eyes closed, roll the head from side to side to emphasize and become accustomed to the relaxation feeling.

(4.) Raise the head up QUICKLY.

(5.) Close the lips and roll the jaw from side to side, like a cow chewing its cud.

(6.) Close the lips forcibly and throw the jaw from side to side until you tire.

These exercises will soon reward you with results. The lips are often rigid and unresponsive to the emission of sound.

Close the lips lightly and then draw the corners back as far as you can into the cheeks until the muscles feel pulled, then allow them to relax. This looks like an exaggerated smile.

Repeat this exercise but instead of allowing the lips to relax into a normal position, bring them back with an active pucker as though you were about to whistle. Do this often.

The jaw affects the lips directly.

Drop the jaw with the lips closed, then with the lips alone form the vowel-sounds of

OH - O - HO

PA - MA.

Be careful the jaw is relaxed and only the lips are used to form these sounds. Breathe deeply before the exercise. Repeat many times.

In the same position breathe deeply into the diaphragm and drop the jaw. Then with the lips form the sound of

AH - AH - A-A-AH.

Visualize the sounds as you use them. The sound of "O" as a round ball. The sound of "A" as a fan-shaped sound coming from the lips with the corners raised as in a smile.

These sounds must hit against the hard roof of the mouth and be blown forward behind the upper teeth. The lips alone form the sounds. Avoid jaw movements.

Placing the vowel-sound behind the upper teeth gives it greater freedom and hitting it against the hard palate gives it carrying-power.

The tongue must lie in the bottom of the mouth touching the lower teeth all around during these vowel-sounds of "A" and "O - O."

With the jaw relaxed form the sound of "E - E."

The tongue is slightly raised at the sides for the sound of the vowel E. The "E" sound must be blown forward with more force than "A" or "O" as the tip of the tongue is apt to interfere. To prevent this, place the tip of the tongue strongly behind the lower teeth.

The special formation of these vowel-sounds is important for clearness and carrying power—resonance.

Form the "O" sound well inside the lips which are megaphoned.

Form the sound "AH" well inside the lips which are flexibly broadened in a smiling position.

It is better to do these exercises often and for a short time than seldom and for a longer period. If you repeat these exercises correctly and often they will do wonders for you.

When these vowel-sounds have been completely mastered add the consonant sounds before and after them

LA - LA - RA - RA

R - OR - O - RO

LE - LE - LE

Roll - Roll - Roll

Book - Book - Book

Work these sounds until they become easy and always remember that the consonants must be sounded with the lips and the tip of the tongue—NO JAW MOVEMENT.

Do all these exercises on the balls of the feet as set forward in the first exercise for "TUNING THE INSTRUMENT."

Between the exercises pause long enough to think of the formation of the next sound and breathe into the diaphragm so that you will have plenty of breath to work with.

In all these exercises, dwell upon the vowels and subordinate the consonants until this becomes natural whenever you speak.

Subordinating the consonants does not mean they must not be touched upon with clear-cut sounding at all times, especially at the end of the word. Never allow the end of a word to go back into the throat and become just a mumble. Finish a word with all the attention that is needed to clearly articulate it. There is no excuse to be made for the slighting of a sound because it is at the end of a word.

The foregoing is comparable to the fingering exercises on a piano or a violin. At first, they are very much in evidence but soon become so much a part of the player that they are no longer noticeable action. They soon become subordinated to more important elements but mentally they are always clear and unfaltering. There is no real carrying power to the consonant sounds. They act more as a fillip to the vowels and propel them on, as it were.

When all this is managed easily, speech becomes more euphonious and flowing, more rhythmic and fluent. I do not believe that a large number of intricate and complicated exercises need be practised in order to become accomplished in vocal co-ordination. A faithful and patient use of what I have set down here will show results quickly and permanently.

This is the first step in naturalness. When the student masters these first steps he can go on by himself or with an intel-

ligent instructor who should carry on with equally natural methods based upon natural laws.

The following will give you good material to exercise the tongue and lips, also to help relax the jaw:—

ABOVE	BOOK	O'ER	EVE	OUST
ABODE	LOOK	OLD	ELF	OOLONG
ADORE	TOOK	OVER	EARTH	OO-MING
SOON	BROOK	ARRIVE	BOON	ERST

A good voice is a healthy voice.

The approach to truth is made by thinking, not by blindly accepting what some one else has said. That way lies the feeble road to affectation and imitation. From start to finish, in Speech Education, the mental control of the body is the chief requisite to success in production. Dwell upon the CENTRES until they are MASTERED.

The Centre of the brain is concentration—a focusing upon one point—CAUSE.

The Centre of the body is the sternum where the third rib meets it—MEANS.

The Centre of the voice is diaphragmatic breathing—EFFECT.

There is no expression in concentration. It is a volitional process meant to control and clarify.

The process of thinking is through transition which means the leap of the mind from idea to idea. Example: There was a tree here—a road there. This is a simple example of the idea. The mind leaps from a tree to a road and thus action and expression begin to move, propelled by breath and articulation.

WHY AM I SELF-CONSCIOUS?

Self-consciousness is a form of conceit—an egoism. It shows itself in many ways—in the unnecessary use of the extremities, such as swaying the body aimlessly from side to side, or moving the hands for no reason. This waste of effort distracts the mind of the listener and tires the speaker. There are many other signs of self-consciousness but these are the most common.

There are a number of reasons for this condition and perhaps the first is lack of preparation or knowledge of the subject. Second, thinking about yourself, instead of thinking about what you have to do and then applying technique to the situation. To overcome this, make an effort to concentrate upon centres.

I will not expect you to entirely agree with me when I say that deep breathing is the answer to most of the problems that trouble the would-be speaker.

There must be long, deep searchings and struggles, and, yes, suffering before we wholly understand this approach. Those of the Far East believe it and make great use of it. Just follow what I give you and find out for yourself what deep breathing will do for you. Deep and prolonged breathing will overcome any tendency to nervousness and self-consciousness.

A person should literally be unconscious of his body whilst speaking. The exercises I have given you in this book will search out muscles you did not know you possessed and make them flexible and responsive.

The brain is the seat of sensation so we work upon the spine where lie all the bases of the nerves. The nerves control the muscles. The two main intersections of these nerve centres lie at the base of the brain and at the lower part of the spine, just above the hip-bone. At the junction of these two points is the seat of control.

These few simple exercises are some of the marvellous methods of HARMONIC PHYSICAL EXPRESSION—ones which open the door to speech. Like all other approaches to natural law, it looks easy at first, but all movements that look easy are really the result of skill.

That which you call nervousness is really a thing to be desired. It is proof positive of life. It lends exhilaration to the whole being. There is nothing so near hopelessness as the lack of it. A dead nerve has no feeling. The trembling and twitching that at times accompanies this "nervousness" must be transferred from the place it is felt, usually in the extremities, to the Centres where it can be handled as good material and not allowed to run riot.

WHY AM I ALWAYS SO NERVOUS WHEN I SPEAK IN PUBLIC?

Do not be discouraged. This is really not a bad condition. When you cease to feel the exhilaration of some nervousness you have become a speaker who is apt to be too glib and mechanical. When this nervousness extends to a shaky feeling inside, an intelligent use of Pause will give you control. The subject of Pause is important and will be discussed later under its own heading.

WHY AM I NOT ABLE TO ARTICULATE DISTINCTLY?

Articulation is the one element of speech education that comes nearer the mechanical than any other. There must be direct work upon the organs of articulation—tongue, lips, and teeth.

The meaning of articulation is the “moving of joints” also the separating of syllables. There can be no clear articulation until the tongue is made to act skilfully and definitely. To be able to attain this, the tip of the tongue must be made to obey. It must touch the teeth, when necessary, with sure attack. All articulation must take place directly in front of the teeth or directly behind them. The breath must blow the sound there and it must not be allowed to slip back. It must be kept forward until the last syllable is distinctly heard. A throaty or flat tone is the result of not keeping the sound forward. The activity is taking place too far back in the throat. The speakers who are guilty of this defect often leave us in doubt as to whether they are speaking English or not.

The function of the lips is to either interrupt the flow of tone so as to form consonants, or to allow the breath sounds of the vowels to pass through in their right formation. Articulation is the action of those organs meant for that purpose.

Physiology is the science of the function of living things. We have found the use of all organs and parts of the human body. We know that animals have organs that are more or less alike. It is the ignorance of our own bodies and functions that seems to me to be incomprehensible.

Every organ in the body affects every other organ and often creates reactions on the outside that are apparent to the eye and ear, and go to show the inward condition. In the early stages these symptoms are easily handled and adjusted.

If there is a fever we look for the cause. If there is a rash we know at once there is something wrong to cause it. When the cause is known and set right the desired effect follows automatically. This applies to articulation as well as to anything else.

There are organs that are specially and specifically put into the body to produce speech. Almost all animals can produce sound, but man is the only animal that can naturally articulate.

“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.” Man became articulate when “God breathed into man the Breath of Life and he became a living soul.” This is only superficially touching upon a subject that

can be plumbed to eternal depths, and discussed at great length did space permit.

Articulation is purely a personal matter. The organs of articulation are yours and it is to your benefit to use them for this purpose. Hear yourself make the sound of the vowels and study the placing of them in the mouth. Listen to the sound you make and try to improve it.

Touch upon the consonants definitely. Do this over and over again until you get the desired results. Every sound is formed differently. The formation of the mouth of one person is unlike the formation of the mouth of another, so no one can go by a set pattern, but all can remember one thing—that speech must leave the mouth with as much ease as can be acquired.

Speech comes from the inside out.

Learn to visualize the sounds as they leave the mouth. I have given you the method of performance and food for thought, but, in the last analysis, YOU must do the speaking and YOU must do the practising.

I am not in favour of set sounds for people. We must use them all. I believe when a person feels the need to speak and has the desire to express himself, through the speaking voice, he will work hard to do it in as becoming a manner as possible.

The ear has as much to do with good articulation as the articulatory organs. The organs of articulation are the gadgets you use, as skilfully as may be, but it all begins with thinking and a responsive body.

The vowel-sounds must be practised repeatedly until you can hear them come from the mouth clearly, supported by breath. "No muscular effort between the diaphragm and the articulatory organs" is the goal to be desired.

I must bring to your attention once again, that all consonants are formed just behind the teeth or in front of them. Consonants must be only lightly touched upon but still with a strong distinct touch that leaves no doubt as to which one it is, either in the mind of the listener or the speaker. The last sound of a word is most important and must never be clipped or slighted.

The letter "R" is the bug-bear of the English language and has caused more controversy than any other sound. Little children, and many who should know better, often slight the letter "R" and substitute "W" for it.

The sound of "R" is formed by relaxing the jaw as in "AH" then raising the tip of the tongue and rolling it back against the

roof of the mouth—there you have the sound of “R.” It must not, on any account, be chewed with a jaw action, or mumbled.

The sound of “T” is formed by the tip of the tongue alone, directly behind the upper front teeth.

The sound of “M” is a nasal sound and is formed with the lips alone, the breath going through the nose as the lips are closed.

The sound of “N” is only partly nasal as the lips are open and the tip of the tongue is hit against the back of the upper teeth.

The sound “B” is a purely lip sound. The jaw is relaxed and the lips form the sound.

There is an element of speech that is little understood and is often neglected even by experts. It is called a VOICE MUR-MUR. A voice murmur is a breath sound between syllables and words. It is like an up beat in music. It has no tone to it, but is quite recognizable to those who have been trained to look for it.

This murmur must be practised and listened for.

Example: The fog / came under / the door. The murmur is between the “g” in fog, and the “c” in came. It is also between the “r” in the word under, and the “t” in the. Say the sentence over clearly and slowly until you can recognize the murmur, then look for it in your own and others’ speech. By doing this you will have taken the first step in smoothness, which is acquired by a sense of rhythm.

The practice of this voice murmur, like all the other exercises given in this book, is for a purpose. It soon becomes an unconscious effort. The following words, for practice, have a particular object.

The “S” sound is an ugly one. The hissing of the “S” must be avoided. To be able to do this, the speaker must dwell upon the vowel-sounds before and after it. Do this in an exaggerated form until it becomes a habit to avoid the hissing sound of “S” as much as possible except at the end of a word.

SOME	SOON	SEEN	STOOL	ASSIST
SINK	MOORS	BUT	TIM	LIMB
MY	BORE	TALK	LIST	ASSUME
NOW	BECAUSE	TAMS	NEW	LETTERS
TOSS	BETTER	BATS	TAPPED	LOST
NAMES	TATTERS			

The lips and tongue do not articulate alone. They must have the material of breath to work with. The tongue is of better use

when it is controlled, this applies at all times, but especially during speech.

No section of speech can be trained alone. Articulation is useless without breath control. The human voice beginning at the diaphragm and ending outside of the nose and lips is capable of great variety of tone and pitch. The human voice is so superior to any mechanical or man-made instrument that it can not be compared to any, but, unless we learn to use it in detail, it is far from a perfect or beautiful instrument.

IN YOUR PRACTICE, AIM AT DISTINCTNESS NOT SPEED.

Begin slowly and do not increase the speed. Aim rather at improvement. Listen to yourself. No two voices are alike. Some are naturally more flexible than others but all need regular practice for improvement.

There is no voice that can not be improved. There is no reason to be discouraged. You can make what you wish of your voice if you work for it in the right direction. Some one once said that speech is "Mind over Mutter." Apt, if not elegant.

WHY IS IT THAT MY VOICE DOES NOT CARRY?

Carrying-power is used in speech education as meaning resonance. A tone must resound to carry. There are many resonators in the human instrument, but the bone that forms the roof of the mouth, the hard palate, is given you to hit upon as a perfect sounding-board.

A speech sound may be harsh, nasal, or blurred and each of these faults be distinct from the other. When we say, as is often done, "he talks through his nose" it is a contradiction of terms. The speaker does not speak through his nose; that is where the sound should come from. The nasal passage is blocked and the speaker has no free tone through this passage. The nasal resonator gives the head tone which is so important to both speech and song.

The greatest fault of almost all English speakers is that they do not open their mouths when they speak. It is apparent that opening the mouth is important if a sound is to be heard distinctly and made to carry any distance.

Listeners develop a strained expression trying to hear a voice which does not carry. This is because the speaker's articulation is careless and blurred in a slovenly manner. There is nothing that will discourage interest more than for a speaker to give the

impression of having no special desire to be heard—a kind of “Take it or leave it” attitude.

CONTROL OF BREATH IS THE BASIS OF CARRYING-POWER.

The breath forced over the larynx by the action of the diaphragm vibrates the vocal ligaments. The breath hitting against the resonators and articulated forward clearly will carry unbelievable distances. Never attempt to gain the effect of power by force. Use more Pause and articulate distinctly, dwelling upon the vowel-sounds. The air-waves carry the sounds, but you must give the waves the harmonious sounds to carry. They will do the rest. There is no carrying-power in the consonants. It is the vowel-sound that carries. A whisper can carry a great distance if rightly produced. The first thing to remember is that you do not do all the carrying with your voice. The all-important object is to produce the tone with as much power behind it as is necessary.

The instrument must be thoroughly well tuned (*see Exercises 2 and 3, pages 9 and 10*).

The diaphragm must be under control.

Articulation must be clear and distinct.

Each syllable must be given its full value.

Consonants touched with definite attack, but always subordinated to the vowel-sounds.

Pause plays a great part in carrying-power. Once more may I reiterate—Never force the voice to try to gain increased power.

During Pause breathe deeply, articulate slowly and carefully.

Dwell upon the vowels with longer stress.

IT IS THE VOWEL-SOUND THAT CARRIES.

Exercise for carrying-power:—

Fill the diaphragm and emit the vowel O breathe O breathe O.

Fill the diaphragm and emit the vowel AH breathe AH breathe AH.

Fill the diaphragm and emit the vowel E breathe E breathe E.

Fill the diaphragm and emit the vowel I breathe I breathe I.

Fill the diaphragm and add to each vowel the sound of M M M.

The “M” sound is purely nasal and the lips are closed following the vowel.

Fill the diaphragm and add “T” to the vowel-sounds.

“T” is an explosive behind the upper teeth.

Fill the diaphragm and add to each vowel the "D" sound. Listen, and both hear and feel the difference between the "T" and "D" sounds.

Fill the diaphragm and forcibly emit the sound of HA HA HA.

This "HA" sound is like a laugh but with more force (a belly laugh). While doing this last exercise place the hand on the diaphragm and increase the sound (a laugh) louder and louder until the diaphragm becomes active. Stop this exercise for a time if you feel dizzy or nauseated. Then begin again.

Work carefully and often upon the sound of "R."

Roll the tip of the tongue until it trills easily. Do this repeatedly. Then say H - I - L - L. B - I - L - L.

Fill the diaphragm and blow out the sound RILL SILL TILL and with the breath that is still in the diaphragm forcibly blow out the "AH" sound all in one sound. If the diaphragm does not seem flexible enough do the following exercise:—

Lie flat on your back on a hard surface, such as the floor. Allow the floor to hold you—feel that all the weight of your body is upon the floor. Place the hand on the diaphragm and breathe against it through the nose and expel through the mouth. Force the diaphragm to expand and contract by muscular effort. Then expand it with the breath that you take into it. Blow this out forcibly for a few times then take the breath in slowly and expel it softly as long as there is any breath left.

Another exercise that gets results is:—

Stand on the balls of the feet and raise the hand opposite the lips, about 2 feet from the mouth. Take a deep breath then blow a thin thread of breath into the palm of the hand counting regularly, to yourself, until all the breath is out of the diaphragm. Do this again and again until you can double the count or, in other words, control it longer.

I must repeat this warning again. Do not try to increase the resonance by forcing the voice but speak slowly, drawing out the vowel-sounds, and make an effort to use PAUSE to the fullest degree.

Distinctness is of more value than loudness.

The difficulty is that the average speaker will become somewhat excited when he thinks he is not being heard, and will force the tone from anywhere he can get it. This soon results in irritation in the throat. Open the mouth, relax the jaw and megaphone the lips, then give the diaphragm every chance to work and thus your position is established.

WHAT IS DICTION?

By your speech shall you be known.

The Oxford Dictionary says "Diction is a choice and use of words in speech." It is rather more—the sound of words in speech, acceptable to the cultivated ear. People who have always heard good diction, who have not had to learn to speak it in one or two generations, have had their ears attuned and naturally speak it. It is from this source that those who are trying to improve their speech must learn to recognize good diction when they hear it. A few examples will illustrate my point:—

The word "GENUINE" is pronounced with a slight contraction of the last syllable and not, as so many pronounce it, as though the last syllable were "wine."

The word "ADDRESS," whether a location or a communication to an assembly, has the stress upon the last syllable. I could go on at great length with benefit.

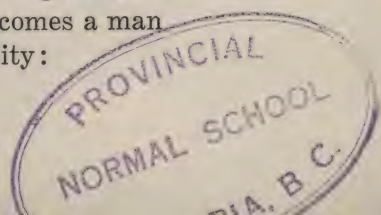
It is necessary that the ear of youth should be cultivated to recognize good diction, as it is cultivated for music appreciation. The depths of depravity to which the English language has fallen in the last few years is appalling. No human being has ideas, no matter how exhaustive, that can not be adequately expressed by the English language. Yet we are constantly hearing jargon that has no proper place on land or sea. Macaulay once said, "Language, grave and majestic, but of vague and of uncertain import." Our language is most certainly of vague and of uncertain import, and rarely grave or majestic.

The improvement and attention to good diction can be accomplished by hearing good literature well spoken. Who could read the sublime lines of Shakespeare with faulty diction? Can you imagine the reading of the following lines with poor diction, blurred articulation, or lack of tone?

"Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounce
it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you
mouth it as many of your players do, I'd as lief
the town crier spoke my lines."

Or:—

"Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more;
Or close the wall up with our English dead.
In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility:



But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger."

King Henry—Shakespeare.

There are two ways to improve your diction. First, develop the art of listening. Attune the ear to such speakers as L. W. Brockington, who has the most euphonious and cultivated speaking voice we hear over the radio—all too seldom, I might say. There is the rare person who has much sincerity and logic, who has a message that cannot be denied, and yet speaks with faulty diction. These people are not overly criticized, but their words would reach a greater number of people who would be better satisfied to listen, if the diction were more acceptable. If an instrument in an orchestra is somewhat out of tune, we may not give up listening to the music but we would have enjoyed it more if these false notes had not been struck.

Second, cultivate the lost art of reading aloud. You will soon become aware of the musical flow of rhythmic sound, a smooth fluency that can only come from breath support of tone and clear definite articulation.

Once again, I must tell you that continual practice upon vowel-sounds and the subordination of the consonants will do a great amount of good. There is a responsibility upon the teacher in regard to diction. There are any number of teachers who have done remarkable work in their effort to pass examinations and have brilliant scholarship. They would be unrivalled if their diction were better.

A child who has always heard good diction at home will lose respect for a teacher who has faulty diction. After a child grows up and learns by chance that he has poor diction and is criticized for the lack of it, he is inclined to blame the teacher. There will be more beneficial and congenial social contacts because of good diction.

There are a few people who are determined to hold on to what they know to be poor diction, who have the erroneous idea that they are being affected if they make an effort to improve their speech. A few simple rules will eradicate this idea:—

- (1.) Good diction is always the easy way to pronounce words.
- (2.) Often it is only placing the sounds in the mouth, where they should be placed.
- (3.) It soon becomes an unconscious effort, making other sounds grate upon the ear because they do not sound natural.

- (4.) Listening to the speech of a cultivated person who has no particular accent, colloquialism, or affectation is music to the ear.

Good English is good English no matter where spoken and is free from any applied effect.

SINCE THE HARD PALATE IS USED FOR A RESONATOR, WHAT IS THE USE OF THE SOFT PALATE?

The soft palate is called the pharynx and lies farther back in the throat than the hard palate. The pharynx lies behind the tongue at the back of the throat. Allow the tongue to follow the hard palate back until it comes in contact with the soft palate.

The pharynx is like the meeting of four roads:—

- (1.) The Vocal Road.
- (2.) The Nasal Road.
- (3.) The Œsophagus or Food-track.
- (4.) The Trachea or Windpipe.

These four roads meet and form the opening of the pharynx into the mouth. The pharynx must be kept healthy and responsive. The voice comes from within outward.

When certain sounds, such as “M” are articulated it is a purely nasal sound and the nasal opening must respond clearly. The lips being closed during the “M” sound it must go through the nasal passage.

When the “O” or “AH” sounds are used the tongue must be trained to lie in the bottom of the mouth touching the lower teeth all around. This takes some regular practice to be able to relax the jaw and the muscles at the back of the neck.

The sound “E E E” is given with the sides of the tongue slightly raised and the tip of the tongue pressed against the inside of the lower teeth.

You can see that the soft palate or pharynx has an important part to play in speech production.

WHAT IS THE DIAPHRAGM?

The diaphragm is a strong muscle that lies at the base of the thorax—just below the ribs and across the middle of the body. When breath is taken in through the nose it must be consciously felt going into the diaphragm. The diaphragm expands to hold the breath that is used to support tone. The breath is the motivation of tone. It can be readily understood the control of this muscle is the most important first principle to be learned. The

breath from the diaphragm is the material of which speech is made.

The diaphragm is one of the strongest muscles in the body, and can be controlled as can the muscles of the leg or arm or any other part of the body.

There is a general misunderstanding that the breath used for speech production comes from the lungs. The lungs are always full of breath. If the lungs collapsed, you would die. The lungs are the storehouse of breath and may be drawn upon in case of emergency, but the power and control must come from the diaphragm, and because it is both a voluntary and involuntary muscle, it can be controlled. The lungs are composed of a spongy substance, and, of course, can not control the breath to any extent.

A surprising number of people aspire to be speakers who do not even know they have a diaphragm. To master the use of it is worth all the exercising you can give it. It must be used as a bellows and must be made so flexible that you are conscious of every breath you take into it.

THE DIAPHRAGM IS A CENTRE AND CAN BE CONSCIOUSLY WORKED UPON. Flex and reflex the diaphragm as you would any other muscle to make it responsive. The oftener and more regularly you practise the few exercises given in this book, the sooner you will see results. There must be no muscular action between the diaphragm and the articulatory organs (tongue, lips, and teeth). No raising and lowering of the shoulders or action of the muscles of the throat, or constriction of the jaw.

I LOSE MY VOICE ALTOGETHER WHILE SPEAKING—WHY?

There are a number of reasons for this condition. The most common is tension in the throat caused by excitement, indigestion, or exposing the throat suddenly to a cold draught. Any of these could cause you to lose your voice. A medical man would likely treat you for a germ or some physical ailment. It can be that when the mental strain is removed, and some intelligent exercises applied, the throat will return to normal.

Rest is a great restorative, but of what use is rest if the person returns to the same fault that caused the trouble? A speaker's life must be as thoroughly disciplined as an athlete's.

A complete understanding of one's own peculiarities, combined with a technique tried and known to be true, will overcome the loss of voice.

To sum up the problem: The loss of voice is seldom an affection of the vocal chords, but is likely to be the result of bad production or careless training. It could be the lack of blood supply to the organs needed to be used. When the loss of vocalization occurs, look for the cause in what is known as "false placement" or the use of what is generally spoken of as the "false chords."

WHY DOES MY THROAT BECOME IRRITATED WHILE SPEAKING?

Because you are using the wrong muscles. There must be no conscious activity in the throat while speaking. The throat is a tube for the breath to pass through. The breath, released by the diaphragm, passes over the vocal chords which vibrate, thus producing tone. There must be no interference between these two points (the diaphragm and the articulatory organs). Any interference between these two points shows plainly that muscles which should not be used are active. The result is soreness in the throat.

The most common fault that will result in defects of the voice is a too rigid jaw, or a too active one. The jaw is given to you to masticate your food. It is made for that purpose and that purpose only. It is not an unknown habit for people to seem to chew their words.

Relax the jaw and concentrate carefully upon articulation during the forward placing of vowels and consonants. The jaw must be RELAXED. Keep the articulation well forward and never allow it to slip back. The breath keeps the articulation in this forward position.

This will soon become easy if the lips are made flexible by exercises. The muscles around the lips are numerous, sensitive, and strong. They often interfere with the megaphoning of the sounds.

The continued habit of a rigid jaw will result in a nervous condition that might easily affect seriously the general health.

Behind the throat, and just at the top of the shoulders, at the base of the skull are nerves which control the facial muscles. These nerves intersect at this point. The muscles that are controlled by these nerves must be kept in a flexible condition. It is a well-known fact that many cases of nervous breakdown have

been caused by the constant pressure upon the wrong muscles of the throat, during speech. A SPEAKER SHOULD NEVER BE CONSCIOUS OF HAVING A THROAT.

I STUTTER—WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT?

First let us analyse the difference between stuttering and stammering. They are not the same, you know.

Stuttering has to do with the articulation and so is directly connected with the organs governing it (tongue, lips, and teeth).

Stammering has to do with the vocalization, and so is directly connected with the larynx, pharynx, and the vocal passage.

Kimplen, Willis, Ellis, Melvill Bell, and others fulfilled a great place in the realm of speech defects. But, like all other pioneers, they outlived their uses and their methods became obsolete and newer methods took their place.

There is great need for something to be done about speech defect. Only rare cases do not respond to the right treatment. It is not that this treatment is intricate or particularly difficult, but it means a long, tiresome process for both student and instructor. It means infinite patience and sympathetic application.

The basic trouble that results in these speech defects is lack of rhythmic breathing during the utterance of words.

The person who stutters has great trouble with consonant sounds and the muscles of the face show spasmodic movements (*see Vocal Co-ordination Exercises*). There is most certainly muscular activity between the two conscious points (the diaphragm and the articulatory organs). It is more than this. The action is taken from the centres and placed upon the extremities. There are conditions where extremities are unnecessarily active, such as twitching of the arms and legs, known as St. Vitus' dance. These unconscious movements often originate from the same cause as stuttering. Except in the case of senility, all are habits and can be overcome.

First begin with the continual practice of rhythmic breathing exercises, then the gradual use of the simple sounds of the consonants, spoken softly but accurately. This will show marked improvement in time. Do not expect results for some length of time, as the student must become aware of the organs to be used and forget the ones he has been using. A change of this kind is always accomplished slowly. The teacher must never be discouraged or allow discouragement to enter the mind of the pupil. This is very important as a person suffering from a speech defect is sensitive and has likely been made more so by having attention

drawn to it. The building-up of his ego is, perhaps, the most important part of the treatment. Improvement will be apparent when the consonants can be articulated with less effort, and the spasm becomes less noticeable.

Many persons have this stuttering habit when speaking but have no trouble when they sing. This is because their minds are concerned almost entirely with melody which is a sense of rhythm. The whole principle is to establish and develop a sense of rhythm within the pupil. There have been many books written upon this subject, for it is a specialized one, but the few simple exercises given in this book will be of great benefit if faithfully followed.

EXERCISES FOR STUTTERING.

This is only a hint to the teacher. The training of an instructor to handle any of the nervous reactions to the spoken word is a long and highly specialized one, but much can be done by a teacher who is sympathetic, and whole-heartedly in earnest in his desire to help.

Have the student do the No. 1 Exercise, under Exercises for the Lips, page 12 in this book, until he can accomplish them with ease and perfect relaxation. Then work upon the first intersection of the body (Exercise No. 1, page 8) until the jaw is perfectly relaxed. Next have him do the lip exercises (page 12) until his facial muscles respond without effort. Give these exercises regularly and often but never until the student is tired. You will accomplish nothing by mechanical repetition. The point is to get response. This can not be done if the student is unwilling or disinterested. At first allow the student to lie down and rest between exercises. Teach him to relax every muscle in his body while lying on a hard surface. After this is done, over a period of time which will have to be regulated, give the student the exercises while standing upon his feet, as outlined in this book. Do all this before you begin to teach the articulation.

The next step is to give the exercises for CARRYING-POWER (page 21). As improvement is seen, increase the length of time in speaking and the use of more consonant sounds. At this stage the student is usually interested enough to help himself, and then your troubles are practically over.

During all these exercises never once raise your voice above a quiet, low conversational tone. This is one point that must never be neglected. It is something an instructor must learn to do. When the student is being taught the breathing, while lying

on the floor, the teacher must say "inhale," "exhale," in a low, rhythmic, soothing tone, so as to get a gentle, almost unconscious response.

During the first, and I might say, all through these exercises the student must exert as little effort as possible. Although the instructor must be on the alert every minute he must never show the slightest strain or effort. He must never give any evidence of forcing an action or sound upon the student. This is a mild form of mesmerism in so far as a soothing atmosphere is concerned.

These simple exercises will re-establish a condition that has been distorted into a troublesome handicap through bad habits. The student must be made so strongly conscious of his centres that he will depend upon them, and wait for expression to radiate to extremities.

When the student arrives at the point of experimental speech and shows the slightest sign of resuming bad habits, change the exercises tactfully, lest gains won in confidence be lost. You can see for yourself what a difficult task is an instructor's, if he follows even the foregoing simple directions, to slowly mould the student's intuition.

WHAT ABOUT STAMMERING?

Stammering is constriction of the muscles in the oral passage which, as it grows worse, convulses the larynx. Take the activity from where it is, and put it where it belongs. Take the activity from the extremities and work until you get it at the centres.

It is well known that "A thought repeated becomes an action, and an action repeated becomes a habit." Let us put this into reverse. Stuttering and stammering are habits—they cause certain detrimental effects or actions. Thinking is the first step in making progress toward overcoming this habit. This is an adult viewpoint. Children must be handled in the well-known "play way."

Adults can soon consciously handle their own problems when they understand how to go to work upon them, using methods that are the most natural and have been proven to be the best in obtaining results. The amount of patient practice put upon the problem governs the results obtained.

One thing to keep in mind, never make a conscious effort to get power at first, and on no account force either tone or articulation. Form the vowels and consonants where they should be

formed, and only breathe them at first. Always have plenty of breath support as material to work with.

Fill the diaphragm full of breath, and then expel it with a whistle until the diaphragm is empty of breath. When the right muscles become accustomed to their particular functions, increase the sound gradually. A whistle is one of the best exercises for the stutterer to use, as the breath slides past the larynx to be expelled by the pucker of the lips.

I am giving you my experience of many years in working with students who have had this difficulty, and I can say in all sincerity, all have been helped toward normalcy and a large percentage entirely cured.

It has often been said by people who are supposed to know, that those who stutter and stammer are of a shy and retiring nature. This is not true in all cases. The shy and retiring quality develops after the person realizes what a handicap he is labouring under. Children often endure tortures from other children because of speech defect.

Ridicule should be forbidden by law—at least in dealing with children. It is one of the most damaging and cruel weapons that can be used upon a child. It is uncalled for and stupid when used by any one to draw attention to a defect. Ridicule springs from ignorance and is employed by those who try to hide their own lack of knowledge. It has no place in any kind of education.

CAN THE EAR BE TRAINED?

The many authorities who have contributed to the theory of the training of the ear go back as far as 1791. Kempelen (1791), Dutrochet (1809), Liskovius (1814), Mueller (1839).

No matter what mistakes these men made in their work, they had the saving grace of trying to emphasize the physiology of the larynx. In the face of modern ideas their methods now seem mechanical and, in many ways, crude, but we must give credit where credit is due. They did open the door to us and, even to-day, there is much to be learned from them. The life of any pioneer is a thankless one, but no one gives a lifetime of work to a subject without leaving some bit of truth behind. These men made their contribution to the realm of voice production; but, scientific as they seemed then to be with their little gadgets of mirrors, compared to the modern X-ray and our study of natural law, they are of very little use to us to-day. These men at least had perseverance and did not falter in their study. I wonder there were any singers or speakers in those days, after

they had had instruments poked down their throats to see how the larynx worked. It was Lamperti who convinced the world that the larynx, important as it is, is only part of the whole instrument; that the whole human structure must contribute to the production of both speech and song.

In the endeavour to train the ear, the following rules may be adhered to with good results:—

(1.) The eustacian tubes must be kept healthy and normal, and kept free from any irritating interference.

(2.) Expose the ear to good music until there is a sensuous and æsthetic response to the sounds. Cultivate the ear to react to the music of great operas and oratorios.

(3.) Listen to good oral reading. To my mind there is no better way to cultivate the ear to the nuances of the speaking voice.

(4.) Recapture the art of listening until the ear becomes sensitive to every change of inflection and tone.

The modern trend of “swing” is simply a primitive reaction to rhythm, and for this reason, if for no other, it awakens a sense of response.

CAN A SPEAKER BE TOO DRAMATIC?

Whenever this question is asked, I think there is a confusion of terms for, I am sure, the question means “theatrical” and not “dramatic.” Drama is a portrayal of life.

There have been many books written upon Dramatic Instinct, but dramatic instinct is simply Imagination in action. Any expression that gives the impression of being unreal, may be termed theatrical to separate it from the powerful truth of drama. Imagination is the creative instinct in man, and to understand drama imagination must be thoroughly understood. Without the quality of imagination, man only exists. He is composed of food, water, and bone, and is a dull person. Imagination is a fundamental basic principle of life and its very existence causes the instantaneous element of contrast which plays so important a part in dramatic understanding.

Imagination is composed of elements which are both mental and physical and when put into action create a power which is completely compounded of natural law and spiritual awakening. The elements that compose the mental part of Imagination are Concentration and Identification. The physical parts are Assimilation and Sympathy.

Working from the understanding of these four points gives us a complete creative instrument of human expression.

There must be logic and order in all drama. There must be a place to start from, and build upon. Ruskin says, "Genius is the intervention of personality." Personality is a law unto itself, but it is of little use in growth without a guiding star. When we get into the depths of the study of Imagination it is hard not to go on and take more time than is allotted to this chapter.

I must give a word of warning to those choice spirits who work in the field of creative art. Allow your Imagination to have full freedom and full swing, but guide it through the whirlpools of growth by a clear understanding of the way you are going, so that your art will develop into a well-rounded power and not be wasted in the futile spasmodic heat of impulse. There are but few born with the potentiality of greatness, but all are born with the divine quality of imagination. It is so much of the spirit that no matter how it may be submerged, hindered, or repressed it can never be entirely killed. Its light can never go out.

A speaker who has the quality of emotion is fortunate. We need only look back to that awful day when we stood alone in the midst of a mad world. In our deepest hour of darkness, when there seemed no way out, we heard the voice of Winston Churchill. His voice sounded around the world—steady, and giving hope to a stunned people. Was this Dramatic? Can the mind conceive of anything more so? Yet, it will be remembered for ever. Nothing but the speaking voice could have accomplished such a Dramatic feat.

Imagination directly affects the timbre of the voice. It would be almost impossible to listen for any length of time to a voice without this quality. It would be mechanical or affected. Sympathy must be felt to be portrayed—no mere mannerism or pretense can do this. All emotion must come from the inside and manifest itself, not be applied to the outside to exhibit itself.

There is so much drama in speech and so much speech in drama that they cannot be separated. A sense of drama gives a sympathetic outlook on life and this gives an intelligent approach to the subject in hand.

WHAT SHALL I DO WITH MY HANDS WHEN I STAND UP TO SPEAK?

Nothing. Establish the centre of the body (where the third rib meets the sternum), relax the muscles of the back, especially

the shoulders, and the hands will take care of themselves. The arms will hang from the sockets of the shoulders until they are needed. Watch for this poise in other people. It will bring home to you how a well-controlled body should stand on the balls of the feet, always alert and ready for action but harmoniously erect. The hands are extremities and give meaning to the arms. The hands can mean much more than pointing directions. They can be so expressive that they seem to speak but, like the rest of the body, they must be made flexible and responsive. When the response to a mental picture is strong enough to radiate to the ends of the extremities, the hands show this in the form of emphasis.

A finished speaker uses little or no platform manners, but this does not mean that he stands as though glued to the floor with arms and legs hanging like a wooden image. An interesting speaker gives the impression of being entirely alive and quick to respond to each successive idea.

I shall say a word here that needs to be said in regard to Anglo-Saxons. We are a dull lot on the whole. There must be deep blows to strike a spark. We have the reputation of being self-conscious. Self-consciousness is a form of conceit. Who are we that we should not make fools of ourselves now and again, so as to learn how not to be fools? We seem determined not to show our innermost feelings about anything if we can help it; not even God. When a minister of the gospel is moved by deep sincerity, he is an exceptional man. We would willingly die for our earthly king, although not very enthusiastically. Before our heavenly King we are self-conscious to the verge of boredom. It is the most glorious heritage, this being a child of God, but we seldom become enthusiastic about it. The highest mission of the spoken word is to preach the Word of God. Yet, how often that preaching leaves much to be desired.

PAUSE.

Pause is so important that a separate chapter must be given to it. Pause is the strongest element in the art of speech. It may sound strange to say the strongest element in speech is when you are not speaking, but this is true nevertheless. It is not only true because of the benefit to the listener, enabling him to sort out ideas, but because of the dramatic effect it produces thereby strengthening emphasis. It is true because of the opportunity it gives the speaker to establish conditions conducive to the reinforcement of the whole human organism, such as

giving thought to the next idea, refilling the diaphragm, and changing weight for emphasis or ease.

Dr. S. S. Curry, who was the founder of the Curry School of Expression in Boston, Mass., U.S.A., left many gems of wisdom behind him. One was "Pause is a period of silence filled with mental and physical activity."

Think this through. The word "activity" is the key word to the definition. It does away with any confusion that might exist between Pause and Stop. There is no activity in the meaning of the word "stop." It is the end and a cessation.

Some people have a natural inclination to pause during their speech. That is because they have the "feel" of an audience. This gift is an asset, but it merely touches a power that is great through understanding. The person who speaks without Pause, speaks without thinking. While Pause is the strongest element in speech, hesitancy is the weakest. These two terms must be made clear to the student. They are often confused, like so many other terms of technique in Speech Education.

We Pause because we are in control of all our faculties. We do so as a means whereby we stimulate interest, or become stronger in expression.

Hesitancy is a sign of weakness because it occurs when the speaker has lost his concentration and becomes mired in a swamp of futile attempts to regain it.

PAUSE gives the listener the impression of strength of purpose and is unmistakably noticeable in his poise and self-confidence.

Hesitancy gives the listener the impression the speaker is about to break down any minute. This impression is given because the speaker shows unnecessary action in the extremities, such as wiggling on the feet, clutching at anything that is near enough to get a hold on, or, still worse, the muttering of indistinguishable sounds that have no meaning such as "UR" or "AH." This is an embarrassing moment to both speaker and listener, and is worth any amount of work to be able to avoid it. Pause bridges as well as separates ideas. Pause as a means of emphasis has no equal in producing the effect desired. The mental and physical activity that is in Pause is of great importance.

The order of expression through the human instrument is:—

MIND—Thinking Visually.

BODY—Showing (Pantomime).

VOICE—Telling.

By the time the speaker has grasped the picture in detail mentally (the strength of this governs the length and strength of the Pause), and then has shown it pantomimically before the voice expresses it, there needs must be a Pause for it takes a certain length of silence to do this.

Here is an exercise that will bring sure results. Stand on the balls of the feet (for vibration) and read from memory "The Bells," by Edgar Allan Poe. Follow the order I have given you (Mind, Body, and Voice) until you can strengthen the Pause.

IMPRESSION MUST COME BEFORE EXPRESSION.

Pause is an accidental (a secondary element) growing naturally from one or more fundamentals. PAUSE comes from the two fundamentals—Concentration and Transition. Pause comes between Impression and Expression. All elements in the study of Speech Education are either mental or physical with the exception of two—Pause and Imagination, which are both mental and physical. Imagination is a fundamental, and Pause is an accidental. This is a good thing to remember when analysing the elements that go into the study of Speech Education.

Learn to think visually. An impression (thought-picture) must be vivid and strong. This impression takes time to become released from the mind, go through the body (response), and then be expressed by the voice. This impression must assimilate through the body. It is this assimilation that determines the quality of the voice.

The mastery of Pause takes the student a long way upon the road toward being a finished speaker.

OF WHAT BENEFIT IS CHORAL READING TO SPEAKERS?

This is one of those questions "tossed" at me any place and any time. There have been innumerable books written upon the subject of Choral Reading. In fact, the market has been flooded with them and many of them would suggest it was something new. In many cases the author seems to think he has an original idea, and new methods of his own for teaching it. There is nothing new about Choral Reading. The important point is that the benefits are now more generally realized, as is shown by the popular revival of it. Some of the benefits are:—

It helps to overcome self-consciousness.

Improves articulation.

Gives freedom and flexibility of tone.

Stimulates the desire to co-operate.
Improves breath control.
Stimulates Imagination and Dramatic Instinct.
Awakens consciousness of Rhythm.
Controls extremists.
Gives appreciation of good literature.
It gives confidence to the shy self-effacing person—
whether child or adult.
The exhibitionists (and who hasn't seen them!) merge
with the group and cease to show off.

METHOD AND DIRECTION.

When your group is ready to begin, read aloud to them whatever has been selected. This selection may be yours or supplied by one of the group.

Put forth every effort to get discussion of the selection from the group.

The director should never superimpose his ideas upon the group. Allow them to express themselves freely. Guide them if you like and encourage the discussion to take the form of minute analysis.

Break your selection up into mental pictures, calling upon individuals in the group to give his or her impression.

You must come to a general agreement as it takes too long to discuss each separate interpretation, but you will find that any good selection of literature is not vague as to its meaning.

The next step is to train your group in exercises for good tone and perfect articulation.

First take the consonants and train the students to place them definitely forward on the lips and tongue. The group must be taught to consciously "taste" the sound. This is not just a term but a literal fact.

Then the director must begin to get the "feel" of Rhythm from the group. One good way to get this is to seat them close together and encourage them to sway gently with the rhythm of the selection.

At the beginning always be careful to select for reading something that has a strong rhythmic appeal.

I would suggest that you begin with Edgar Allan Poe's "Annabel Lee" for adults. Jingles are good. A. A. Milne's child poems found in his Christopher Robin series are good for both children and grown-ups.

Never make the mistake of thinking that Choral Reading can be given a slipshod training. Before the group stand on their feet to read, every detail must be thoroughly gone into.

Next, give them thorough breathing exercises. These must be prolonged until the student can feel that every cell of the body is breathing. They must have the feeling that they are "full of breath."

As they stand, teach them to place one hand over the diaphragm and the other on the opposite side, on the back. Then to breathe until they can feel the breath with both hands.

The next step is to practise Vocal Co-ordination (page 27).

Give these exercises before each rehearsal.

The secret of all Choral Reading is to rehearse over and over until the student can live his interpretation.

A director of Choral Reading is like a good director of orchestra, he must bring out of the group what is there, individually at first, then in unity.

UNITY is imperative; "One for all and all for one" is the spirit of this reading together.

Articulation must be as near perfect as possible and one must be careful to instruct from a dictional point of view and not from a phonetical one.

Old and familiar selections are, sometimes, used for exhibition in an effort to camouflage poor articulation. This is a trick that has been used all too often, but it is unforgivable and stupid as the loose training is at once noticeable to an experienced judge.

The ear soon becomes active through the necessity of attention and a desire to be one of the group.

Never interfere with the quality of the individual voice.

Quality is the timbre and is always the result of emotional response. It is a personal and natural element coined from hidden wealth.

All other elements must be watched carefully such as:—

Resonance.

Rhythm.

Diction.

Antithesis.

I must repeat so as to bring your attention once again to the necessity of clear articulation and a good ringing tone but quality remains, always, the personal attribute.

People who are doing public speaking or speech work of any kind will find great benefit from working with a good Choral Reading group.

ARE TIME AND RHYTHM THE SAME?

The words Time and Rhythm come under the category of "Confusion of Terms." In as few words as possible let us go into this subject.

TIME is "An appointed interval of mathematical exactness" (Oxford Dictionary) and so can be handled by appliances or effort from without.

RHYTHM is a pulsation from within. There is nothing mathematically measured about it in any way. It is a sensation and governed by the law of nature.

How often you discover, after hearing a selection of music, that the melody recurs over and over again from some source within you. You become conscious of this only when you give expression to it. The melody has become embedded in your subconscious mind, because of response. No matter what you do this melody will not be denied. Either the conscious mind dominates it or sleep is needed to eradicate it.

I have stated elsewhere that a person who stutters during speech does not do so when singing. This is proof positive that this speech defect can and has been overcome by an understanding and development of a sense of Rhythm put into operation in a practical way. No "mathematical exactness" could do this.

I must revert, once again, to Choral Reading to clarify my point.

The conducting of a group for Speech Reading is quite different from conducting a group for song.

Song is worked out and can be measured and directed from a script of notes, but in Choral Reading the success depends largely upon rhythmic pulsation that must be strong enough to move the group, as a whole, by a power within itself.

This needs practice until the group becomes conscious of that rhythmic motivation from within.

A conductor of Choral Reading would be well advised to stand down from his position occasionally and join the group, allowing students to take their turn at directing. There is no one-way track in this work and no better way to distinguish between TIME and RHYTHM.

CONCLUSION.

This book is no bureau of information of abstract facts but a thorough preparation of the groundwork of SPEECH.

After you have studied all the different principles recommended in this book and have put them into practice, look at your accomplishment from a broad perspective.

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Voices fall into two categories: The CARRYING VOICE and the PENETRATING VOICE.

The Carrying voice is the natural voice, cultivated and trained to respond, under control, to the actions of the mind. Let us assume that all basic requirements have been adhered to and development of the whole artistic sense has been accomplished and the tone is like that of a pipe organ, vibrating on the air-waves and surrounding the listener with exquisite sounds.

The Penetrating voice has a piercing quality. It comes from no farther down than the collar-bone and instead of being carried by the air-waves it breaks through them and, by force, places itself entirely forward into the nasal detonators. There is no difficulty in hearing it but the sound is crude and unsatisfying and leaves the ear of the listener tightened and a bit resentful of its attack.

No matter what modern school of thought you adopt, no matter how advanced you feel you are, the basic principles are always the natural methods, for these have never been surpassed. Never mind if we are jerked summarily from yesterday to to-day—and I mean jerked—jerked over a wide chasm that cuts off the past from the present. Grasp new ideas, by all means, be as modern as you like but do not be carried away by change for the sake of change. This is always a mistake. You must profit by the errors of the past and at the same time “hold fast to that which is good”—that which is tried and known to be beneficial. Be wise; and do not leave behind that which is of value.

A Carrying voice has its foundations in the fundamentals of deep breathing which produce vibration. It can be listened to for any length of time with great pleasure because the vibrations fall upon the ear euphoniously.

An example that will make clear my point:—

The Penetrating voice is comparable to the hard outline of a picture—we see it and know what it is; but that same picture, relieved of its hard outline, filled with colour, lights and shadows, is a joy and a thing of beauty. The Carrying voice is full of colour and subtleties.

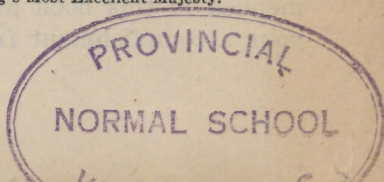
Never forget that a good voice is your birthright—your natural heritage. If you have somehow lost it—every effort you can make to regain it will be worth the toil.

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